



**State of Connecticut**  
**Latino and Puerto Rican**  
**Affairs Commission**

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**Vice-Chair**

*Yolanda Castillo*

**Secretary**

*Emanuela Palmares*

**Treasurer**

*Elena Trueworthy, M.S.*

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*George Hernández*

**Commissioners:**

*Ramón L. Arroyo*

*Migdalia Castro*

*Ana Gonzalez*

*Jay Gonzalez*

*Dr. Ruby O'Neill*

*Dr. Agnes Quiñones*

*Ruben Rodríguez*

*Dr. Eugene M. Salorio*

*Pablo Soto*

*Christian Soto*

*Feny Taylor*

*Danny Torres*

**Executive Director**

*Werner Oyanadel*

**Special Projects Director**

*Lucia Goicoechea-Hernández*

**Associate Commission Analyst**

*Orlando Rodríguez*

**Administrative Assistant**

*Clarisa Cardone*

**MINUTES**

**LPRAC Regular Commission Meeting**

**February 17, 2016**

**Legislative Office Building Room 2D**

**Hartford, CT**

**5:30 p.m.**

Commissioners Present:	Ramón L. Arroyo, Yolanda Castillo, Richard A. Cruz, Jay González, George Hernández, Dr. Ruby O'Neill, Dr. Agnes Quiñones, Rubén Rodríguez, Dr. Eugene Salorio, Christian Soto, Danny Torres and Elena Trueworthy, M.S.
Commissioners on the phone:	Migdalia Castro
Commissioners Absent:	Emanuela Palmares, Pablo Soto and Feny Taylor
Staff:	Werner Oyanadel, Executive Director, Clarisa Cardone, Administrative Assistant, and Anna Bowden, Intern

**Chairman Cruz** welcomed everyone to our meeting. He then asked Commissioner Trueworthy, Treasurer as Commissioner Palmares, Secretary is out to do the roll call. Quorum was established.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:**

**State Representative Matthew Lesser, Chair of the General Assembly's Banking Committee on the House side.**

He thanked the commission for having him here and for Mr. Oyanadel for the invitation. Banking related issues are the biggest issues that we face as a state, it is particularly important to the Latino and Puerto Rican community. His mother was born in Argentina, she grew up there and then emigrated here and her mother went to Argentina as a refugee during the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War at a time when the United States had imposed immigration restrictions and particularly turned its back on refugees from around the world. Argentina and other countries like, Cuba, Mexico, and Venezuela welcomed in refugees in a time when we did not.

1. According to a PEW study in 2013, the net assets of a non-Hispanic white family in the United States of America were \$141,900, the net assets of the average Latino family in the United States is \$13,700 that is more than a 10 fold disparity in wealth. The difference in assets is tremendous. It also affects whether or not, what happens when you go to college, 87% of Latinos who go to college at private universities have to take out student loans which is far higher than it is for any other group. On the student loan side, last year we became the first state to pass the Student Loan Bill of Rights and to try to regulate student loan servicers making sure that if we are going to have a large 87% of students taking out student loans then we should have at least some rules that they play by because it was completely unregulated. There are a number of issues, consumer financial issues from discriminatory car loans. We are finding that applicants of color are paying higher interest rates at car loans to student debt, to abusive practices by debt collectors who are taking advantage of the fact that there are often language barriers and they get default judgements. They are putting that on their docket this year. They just introduced a Bill, the language appeared today if not it should be up pretty soon that would impose standards on debt collectors because very often people would receive a notice that they have to appear before a court and they are getting tons of bills and tons of notices and they are counting on them not showing up in the court, maybe they don't understand the notice because it is written in English and they may not speak English and as a result there are a lots of people who are getting default judgements for debts they don't owe or that they owe a smaller amount and it's been inflated improperly or may have expired so we are going to put common restrictions on that in order to protect consumers. They are trying to get people into the banking system in CT. 73,000 families in Connecticut don't have a bank account. Of then, over half are Latinos. He wants to solicit our opinions and advise about what they can do. Last year they introduced a Bill to try to encourage banks to provide bank accounts for people who don't have social security numbers. One of the barriers might be for undocumented immigrants opening a bank account. A lot of banks say they will provide bank accounts to people without social security numbers but them in practice that may not work

so well. They heard some comments that may not be helpful there may be other barriers to getting people to trust banks to feel comfortable with that.

2. Another issue is the wealth gap, what we can do to help incentivize investments in small businesses in our urban areas in communities that need investment.
3. Issue of Puerto Rico – The debt crisis and the fact that a huge percentage of that debt that is owed is actually owed to financial institutions that are based in this state and that are operating in this state. What can we do to help ease the burden on the commonwealth and make sure we doing our part to support them.

He is working very well with the new Banking Commissioner; it's been a year this week, Commissioner George Perez. He wants to make sure that the dialogue is open and that they continue to talk to LPRAC and if anybody has any advice for them on how they can help meet the needs of the community please let him know.

**Chairman Cruz** thanked Representative Lesser for coming and addressing LPRAC. Those issues are quite large in our communities and are very serious issues and appreciate you coming to us.

**Commissioner Hernández** thanked Representative Lesser and said it's a breath of fresh air for us to hear the concerns especially you as the Chair of the Banking Committee, it's very welcome and he believes he speaks for himself and for many of us that they will continue to hear from you on proactive measures. He has lived the reality that you speak about in terms of small business people not having access to capital because that is what he does, he's a business developer he helps businesses get up and running, entrepreneurs and one of the biggest challenges is that most banks don't even look at you unless you have three years already operating income and an operating statement. That is one of the biggest challenges and it is not only a challenge for the Latino or Minority Business Enterprises (MBE's) that's a challenge for any entrepreneur trying to get started. That may be a place that we can begin to speak to where they can open up the criteria where they actually entertain someone speaking to them as a start of process. The other challenge is Asset Building within the Latino Community. He recalls a few years ago that some of the non-profits that were advocating asset building independent bank accounts and savings accounts to be able to save enough for a down payment for a home and getting training or speaking to about this predatory lending at car dealers, unfortunately most of that funding that was available for those non-profit agencies to advocate and to educate our communities is practically nonexistent and he does not know of any community agency or non-profit agency that actually is funded to be able to bring that level of education and awareness to the community of asset building and setting up the individual savings accounts that many of those used to do and did to help people to building build up access to capital to build up assets. Regarding Puerto Rico, again this is a far reach for us and for your committee but at the very least, a letter can be drafted to those entities that hold the notes and that are really the ones that advocating and are the ones behind closed doors not allowing our Federal Legislators to proceed and offer the protection of bankruptcy laws or measures to Puerto Rico so we can draft a letter, we will be more than happy to hear you out and help you out in that process and come along side of you and getting a letter to the CEOs of those entities.

**Chairman Cruz** thanked Commissioner Hernández. He said one of the things is when we seek out our priorities and how we are going to address them and put those together, we also work with the Results Based Accountability process and that could be something that maybe yourself or part of your staff can connect with our Chair of our Committee, in which we can probably work together and do a public participation under that process to see what the community will tell us as well.

**Commissioner O'Neill** asked Rep. Lesser if he has any plan to look at the for-profit colleges and their predatory loan practices and specifically to look at students at the for-profits who have repeatedly failed a particular course or repeatedly failed certain courses or look at grade inflation because those students (Latinos and Minorities) are such fertile ground for these predatory lending practices and 90% of the income from some of these profits comes from student loans. She is hoping he has a system in place for that.

**Rep. Lesser** said that it is an excellent point and dealing with for-profits he has a constituent who has over \$100,000 in student debt from a for-profit that gave her a degree that is worthless in the State of Connecticut. They promised her that she will be able to be a Real Estate Appraiser and the degree has no validity in the State of Connecticut whatsoever, it doesn't match up what we require and that's fraud. We need to work with law enforcement and the Attorney General to go after fraudulent institutions. What we have done as of 7-1-16 we are going to be the first state to require the people who are servicing student loans or collecting them to be registered by the state. Unfortunately this is mostly Federal dollars/Federal money and the federal government has refused to act on the \$1.3 Trillion in student debt that is now out there. Our way in has been to regulate the loan servicers who are trying to collect the debt and the way to try to resolve that is to require them to adhere to basic standards of fairness and if the loan was issued fraudulently, that certainly raises questions as to whether or not it is a valid loan. The U.S. Department of Education has slowly moved to start to question some of these bogus debts. Until the federal government acts, the debts are still going to be issued; we can just try to protect the people once the debt is due. We are trying to put a minimum standard on the collecting on student loan debts to make sure that is somebody is facing an unexpected hardship that they are not immediately forced into bankruptcy, they are not immediately forced to lose their home. This spring, we are going to be refinancing people who are stuck at high interest rates down to low interest rates. The State of Connecticut has a Quasi Governmental Authority called Chelaw that is going to be bumping people down, they issue rates down to 4.9%. Regarding the RBA process, he is happy to be involved however he can be, and

Commissioner Hernández, the three issues that you raised, 1) Access to Capital, the Governor has a bill out this year to allow the Small Business Express Program which is designed to address that issue to work with banks to try to increase the impact and we passed last year to make sure the money gets to MBEs. Hopefully, using credit enhancements and working with banks that they will be able to magnify the impact to get that much more money to the small business that you are talking about. If you have ideas specifically about the Banking Committee, I am happy to work with you on that and that's a great point. He does not have any information for past funding for asset building for non-profits, if you know of that let me know, he thinks that would be something they would love to take on. For a letter to creditors, that's an excellent project to work on and if we can target folks he would be happy to work with his office, he thinks it's a great idea.

**Commissioner González** thanked Rep. Lesser and as someone who works for the banking industry, he sees student loan issues every day, it's crippling the young generation just as much as the mortgage crisis that we had recently and I think it's another crisis that's about to begin because some of these kids didn't really know what they are taking on. While we focus on some predatory lending – there is an argument to be made about the education about these kids before they go to school, taking on something that they cannot afford. There was a bill proposed in the U.S. Senate last year like Right to Know Act, it establishes guidelines for potential students to receive information about graduation rates from Universities, potential salary earnings on what they can really expect and what this degree will translate into. There are people like myself who do their best on a daily basis to sit down and educate younger kids who may not understand banking or the basics of finance. We should look into private financing for student loans. There was another bill in the U.S. Senate last year, it provides legal framework for private financing for student loans, establishments like PAVE or UPSTART, it allows these private financiers to consider financing these students and ultimately based on a repayment program, based on a certain percentage of their salary or potential earnings after they earn their degree.

**Commissioner Rodríguez** said that he grew up in Chicago and the schools there are way different. One of the things that they do there is they teach kids from the beginning to know what they are dealing with especially with loans. For example, when you go to High School, there are different schools that go there to the school to see your potential, it's like the university they fight for you and they try to get you in. We have to teach the kids in Connecticut that in the beginning, there's different schools and different programs. His son is 17 and is going to the Army but he was looking into the university and Ms. Ruby O'Neill he was going to a profit school because they brainwash this school and we were talking to Ms. O'Neill. We have to teach our kids in High School. From Puerto Rico, he deals with a lot of people and especially in politics and right now it is a difficult place because of the constitution and the constitution from the United States, it's going to be really difficult to get out of this hole that we are in. It's possible, there's option but they are not going to be easy. Thank you for what you are doing.

**Commissioner Quiñones** welcomed and thanked Rep. Lesser and said that she Chair's the Priority and Legislation Committee and asked how we, as a commission, can help you, whether it's raising awareness, creating a campaign as you move forward with three main priorities that you have listed.

**Rep. Lesser** spoke on the Education. They are creating an office in the Department of Banking that will work with parents and students and assist them. His hope is to create a standardized financial education criteria for every student or family in CT who is taking out loans, who is looking at college that will hopefully be available in English, Spanish and other languages to provide standardized education criteria so that people know what they are signing up for. They also passed a bill allowing the State Department of Education to develop that as well. Last year he had a bill that the Department of Banking will promote publicized banks that serve people without social security numbers. He believes that this is the largest amount of people that are not currently using the banking system. He got a lot of feedback, he asked a lot of people if this is a good idea and they said no it's not. The feedback that he heard was, the problem is that a bank's corporate office may say we are ok accepting other forms of identification but at the end of the day it is the responsibility of each bank branch to make the determination that they know who they are dealing with and they have to obey the bank secrecy act which requires them to determine everybody's identity so they had discretion and that wouldn't work because on paper the banks accept whatever and in reality it's another story. There's another barrier which is just the lack of trust maybe because of questions of status, you're worried about flagging yourself or whatever else. He doesn't have an answer. Maybe the answer is talking to community groups and to really get a sense of what are the barriers to using the system in the extent that LPRAC wants to help step in and help try to figure out what those barriers are that would be great. He would love to work with LPRAC to figure out what are the real world barriers that are preventing people from opening up a bank account. He has a list of 36 bills they raised yesterday and by all means they would love to see Mr. Oyanadel testify in front of all 36 of them. Please come over and talk to us.

Next speaker is **Liam Sweeney, Director of ConnCan** and would like his boss, Ms. Jen Alexander speak.

**Ms. Jen Alexander, CEO of the CT Coalition for Achievement Now (Or ConnCAN) and she also invited Ms. Yamen, Director of Research and Policy to join her.** She thanked everyone for the opportunity to come and talk with the commission today. ConnCAN is a statewide advocacy organization entering their 11<sup>th</sup> year of advocacy in the state and are focused on making sure that every child in Connecticut has access to a high quality public education regardless of race, zip code or family income. They do that by conducting research and working with communities and community organizations to inform and advocate for state policies that put students at the center.

**Ms. Yamen, Director of Research and Policy** spoke about graduation rates rising both locally and nationally and Connecticut has had consistently and historically the nation's largest achievement gap. The latest results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress from 2015 show a significant narrowing specifically of the English Language Learner gap in recent years. We also see some district successes and school success, in the Alliance District Program which is the lowest performing districts in the state, we see districts like Bloomfield and New London showing what we call pockets promise what's possible, like significant students improvements as well as increases in graduation rates. We still have a long way to go.

**Ms. Jen Alexander, CEO of the CT Coalition for Achievement Now (Or ConnCAN)** 2012 Commissioner's Network – Report. That program was designed as a program for the state to identify and intervene and provide support to our lowest performing schools in the state. Right now there are 17 schools participating in the program. The state has appropriated upwards of about \$40 million. We only have one year of data for the assessment.

#### **Tape 2 B**

**Ms. Jen Alexander (cont.)** spoke about the Common Core State Standards and the Smarter Balance Assessments. Their Priorities for 2016 Legislative Session are:

- High-Quality Options
- Strengthen School Turnarounds
- Raising Standards & Accountability
- Starting Strong With Quality Early Education
- Supporting Great Teachers With Licensure Reciprocity and
- Fixing Our Fundamentally Broken School Finance System

**Chairman Cruz** suggested to work with Commissioner Quiñones, Chair of the Priorities and Legislation Committee and thanked everyone for coming to our meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Motion made to accept the minutes of January 20, 2016 by Commissioner Dr. Salorio and seconded by Commissioner Hernández.**

#### **Discussion:**

**Commissioner Salorio** said there is a correction on Minutes of 1-20-16 on page 5. Commissioner Soto said he will "Have it to them by 6/2/16". That date is incorrect. That is the date for the RBA.

**Mr. Rodríguez** said it is correct, 6-2-16. There will be another meeting before that.

**Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

**Motion made to accept the minutes of December 16, 2015 by Commissioner Hernández and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones.**

#### **Discussion:**

**Mr. Oyanadel** said that some of the points that Commissioner Hernández brought to our attention, we reviewed everything with him and after reviewing and getting his perspective the minutes that you have here should reflect the changes that so correctly Commissioner Hernández brought to our attention.

**Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

**Chairman Cruz** reported the following:

- He commended the work of the Legislation and Priorities Committee Chaired by Commissioner Agnes Quiñones and our LPRAC Staff for organizing an extremely successful Latino Policy Day at the Capitol. He along with a number of other LPRAC Commissioners, staff, legislators, and members of the community excelled at this informational forum and everyone involved should be commended for such great work;
- This past month he directed the work of the Press Conference on Prison Gerrymandering and commended the Public Information Committee, Priorities and Legislation Committee and our LPRAC Staff for conducting such a great organized event. He received excellent feedback from the articles printed on the subject, TV coverage by CTN, social media and more importantly for getting confirmation by the Judiciary Committee that a bill will be raised and a public hearing will be hosted on a subject that LPRAC is spearheading on this subject;

- Finally and most importantly he requested that LPRAC Commissioners join him and our staff Friday to speak in support of the LPRAC budget at our annual Appropriations Committee budgetary hearing. This hearing will take place in Room 2C, Friday, February 19, 2016 starting at 4:00 PM for HB 5044 5044 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2017.

**Motion made to accept the Chairperson's Report by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Mr. Oyanadel** announced LPRAC's newest intern from Trinity College who is present tonight, Anna Bowden. She helped us all day at the Latino Policy Day and we want to commend her for working with us this year. He then reported that following:

- Governor proposed to cut \$13,000 out of our budget which is about 5.75% of our overall budget per Mr. Rodríguez. This is troublesome for us because this is just the beginning of the conversation. The Appropriations Committee will also hear some additional recommendations, they may decide to do more or less and it is so important that people from our community and commissioners come out and speak at our hearing on Friday.
- He wanted to point out and thank all the Commissioners that participated in the Latino Policy Day. He knows that Commissioner Quiñones and Mr. Rodríguez did a lot of legwork, a lot of decision-making, a lot of organizing. Ingrid Alvarez from the Hispanic Federation provided the funding to actually conduct this event and a number of other organizations that actually said yes when LPRAC called on them to participate in this engagement. CTN aired this program already 5 times and we are going to have part of the program aired on our website. There were so many Legislators, both from the Republican Party and Democratic Party present. Some of them reached out to him so that they can get engaged, they wanted to participate and get their pictures taken and that speaks a lot about our work that we are doing in the Legislature. They want to hear the specifics about our Agenda, it wasn't an opened ended dialogue, it was very specific about some issues that Mr. Rodríguez and Commissioner Quiñones can talk to you about in terms of some of the policies, our bills that are going to be trickled down to Legislation. The issue of the Prison Gerrymandering is a great example of that because we have the Co-Chair of Judiciary Committee saying not only that he will raise the bill, we called the committee and all the clerks knew that the Senator said that this was going to be a big priority for them. We even received positive feedback from Senator Kissel. Senator Kissel, many of us felt that he would be opposing this proposal because we have a large prison in his district, but he is on the record after he was asked about this issue, that this issue that LPRAC is raising has a lot of merit and that he would be excited to hear the pros and the cons of it and he would be willing to entertain this idea. We had one Democratic Legislator that spoke on the media against it. He also represents a district where there is a prison.
- Governor appointed Dr. Raul Pino to serve as the permanent Commissioner of the Dept. of Public Health.
- Finally but not least, he wanted to report that at the last commission meeting, Commissioner Dr. O'Neill brought a concern to our attention. The Executive Committee met on February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at 1:30 p.m. in the Large Conference of the LPRAC office in Hartford about that. The Chairman of LPRAC will expand on this matter during New and Old Business.

**Motion made to accept the Executive Director's Report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy.**

#### **Discussion:**

**Commissioner Rodríguez** said he sent the email to the Chairman because he was on the same letter from Commissioner O'Neill but he never got any response from it because he did send the letter with hers attached the same letter that she sent in.

**Chairman Cruz** said so noted.

**Commissioner O'Neill** said the letter is co-signed by both Commissioners, herself and Commissioner Rodríguez and she sees that it is attributed only to her. She thinks that the Director's report should reflect that there are cosigners; she is not the only signatory on the letter.

**Mr. Oyanadel** said that he doesn't think there is any problem if we add an additional name as requested.

**Commissioner O'Neill** thanked Mr. Oyanadel twice for addressing the concern and for being willing to add the name to the cosignatory response.

**Commissioner Rodríguez** indicated that he had a lot of difficulty hearing every conversation of the LPRAC meeting on the phone system provided by the Connecticut General Assembly.

**Chairman Cruz** said that right now we have it on speaker. We don't know if there is some other way that it can be tapped into the system to do that, we can look further with technical support.

**Commissioner Torres** suggested that maybe we can look at possibly a Skype program in the future so that we can see each other. We are just starting to look.

**Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Commissioner Chris Soto, Chair of this Committee** reported the following:

1. He indicated that he spoke to Mr. Oyanadel and found out that LPRAC is coordinated two major outreach projects that will take a lot of the time of the committee for at least the next twelve months – First is the Lead Poisoning outreach and Second is Oral Health advocacy. We will be having meetings next month on these projects.
2. As you know that we have two meetings that are held in the community so for the upcoming year, if you have input on cities that you think we should go to, please provide that input. Stamford was delayed so we are going to be looking at Stamford and it also offers the opportunity for another city. If you look at the Executive Director's report, it will show you the cities that we visited in the last year or two. If you can't come to the meeting, just shoot an email.
3. He then reiterated about the importance of LPRAC Commissioners attendance to testify in support of the LPRAC budgetary Public Hearing on Friday.
4. The budget is getting reduced so that could impact some of our outreach efforts so we may have to get very creative so we can increase the outreach efforts of our agency or at least maintain the outreach the we have been doing. The parades and obviously this year in an election year, he is thinking about creative ways to get encourage out to vote outreach efforts or at least encourage voting.
5. Next meeting will be on Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. and meet every other month and calls in-between if needed.

**Motion made to accept the Public Information Committee Report by Commissioner Rodríguez and seconded by Commissioner Dr. Quiñones.**

#### **Discussion:**

**Commissioner Hernández** said that he knows that in the Executive Director's report there's a breakdown of the cities that we already visited and Commissioner Soto just indicated that we are looking at what would be the next cities, it would be helpful if down the line, either your committee or through the Executive Director that we have a guideline as to what is the sequence of the cities or what is the protocol of what cities we have gone to.

**Commissioner Chris Soto** said to have a spreadsheet with the City and Date of Last Visited so that visually we can see whose next in terms of priorities and maybe come up with some guidelines.

**Commissioner Salorio** said that when we go to these, we see a big turnout from the community. We do these in Hartford, we never get any turnout from the community. It might be nice to do it in Hartford but to do it on Park Street.

**Mr. Rodríguez** asked to remember the League of Women Voters who came here a couple of months ago and they said they want to collaborate with us. They have a program in place to get former felons reregistered to vote. They have been trying to get into the Latino communities but they have not been able to. So wherever we go next, that we ask them to come along and set up a booth and announce that they are going to be there.

**Chairman Cruz** said its 2016, it's his 6<sup>th</sup> year here and he thinks they visited the great City of Bridgeport probably the year he came in so he would highly recommend to put his city on the list.

**Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **PRIORITIES & LEGISLATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Commissioner Quiñones** reported the following:

1. She recognized Mr. Rodríguez on his leadership and hard work and also the incredible collaboration from the Hispanic Federation, Ingrid Alvarez, and she and I will be talking to debrief and think about what we want to do next year. We debriefed and decided that there is momentum, this was our First Policy Day, it was very successful, and people were talking about it in the hallway, in the parking lot and the day after. We want to present for a vote that we hold a 2<sup>nd</sup> Latino Policy Day in 2017.
2. We have 21 Bills that so far have been proposed that are being tracked. State Representative Johnson attended her session which was on the dual language magnet school, and we had the Sheff movement and Dr. Howard from the UCONN School of Education, we had the lead Attorney for the Sheff-O'Neill case and we had a number of youngsters that came from New Haven that shared why they wanted to attend a dual language school in New Haven. State Rep. Johnson, the next day proposed Legislation to have dual language in her district and that's very significant and we want to take credit for that.



3. She then spoke about the Students 4 a Dream and that they came to talk to us and asked for our support in their quest to be able to have legislation passed that would allow them to have access to state financial aid that we have that state residents have and they don't. In response to that request, we have a letter and we'll be discussing it, it's on the Minutes of 1-20-16. We have done this in the past.

**Motion made to accept the Priorities and Legislation Committee Report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **SPECIAL PROJECTS COMMITTEE REPORT**

**Commissioner Torres, Chair of this Committee** said that the Special Projects Committee met last Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and discussed the following matters:

1. They discussed all the items that the board approved moving forward with, such as the retreat for fall 2016 – maintaining it local to save on costs.
2. The Hispanic Heritage new USPS stamp unveiling for the same reasons we will host the unveiling as part of the July monthly Board meeting.
3. The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Tribute to Hispanic Veterans – given this important anniversary, we have designed and will give each Veteran a pin commemorating the date, a certificate and one of our commemorative coins.

**Motion made to accept the Special Projects Committee Report by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Hernández. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **RBA COMMITTEE**

**Commissioner Salorio** reported the following as Commissioner Pablo Soto is absent:

The Next Results Based Accountability Turn the Curve session will be on the topic of Lead Poisoning – children living in urban areas which are something that came to public notice 50 years ago and supposedly was if not resolved considerable improved but hasn't been. This just one of those problems that is solvable. It will held on 6-2-16 at 10:00 a.m. at the Wilson Branch of the New Haven Library, we will provide you with additional information. With that, our intern Miss Casey Quinn is organizing this. We do not at the moment have a moderator for it, we have not funds to pay for a moderator, so unless Commissioner Quiñones want to step up and does it, or myself. He then asked Commissioner O'Neill to correct him. At our meeting we had some discussion about the process of involving public participation do you remember. We were talking about public participation at the meeting or is there a requirement for public participation to determine what the topic will be. Could you explain it please?

**Commissioner O'Neill** said that we weren't sure if public participation was a requirement at the meeting or that public participation decided what the topic was.

**Mr. Rodríguez** said that there are two issues, there's a Lead Poisoning RBA – it's done, we don't need public participation. The other issue was how do we go about implementing the changes to the RBA in the LPRAC Annual Report where we pick new indicators and the discussion was to we need public discussion on that and the answer was no and Commissioner Salorio said that last time there was no public discussion that he sat down with Dr. Shack from Charter Oak so there was no need for any more discussion on changes in the indicators and that he would make the changes to the annual report by 6-2-16.

**Commissioner Salorio** replied that this is correct.

#### **Tape 2 A**

**Motion made to accept the Results Based Accountability Committee Report by Commissioner Trueworthy and seconded by Commissioner Torres. Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

#### **NEW AND OLD BUSINESS**

**Chairman Cruz** said that at the request to encourage commissioners to contact their legislator to sponsor a Bill to study non-partisan redistricting. In your packets there is some information about redistricting.

**Mr. Rodríguez** said we will be redistricting in 5 years but we are recommending for a Legislator to create a taskforce reviewing into it so when 2021 comes around we don't say oops we didn't know anything. He spoke to Senator Linares and he thinks he is going to introduce a Bill. Another area we can use your help is in the dual language school, we have one in Windham that has been proposed we don't know what's going to happen. He wants to bring to everyone's attention that individual Representative Susan Johnson is not Latino she is not Latina and she did this for us. None of the Latino Legislators have done this.

**Commissioner Hernández** spoke regarding Mr. Rodríguez's two points regarding the Gerrymandering issue that potentially Representative Linares may bring something up, and then to what Representative Johnson brought up regarding the dual language magnet school in Windham District. What is the protocol for us to reach out to the Black and Latino Caucus so that they can come on our side?

**Mr. Oyanadel** responded that the Black and Latino Caucus normally requests our testimony around this time and we believe that they will be calling us and then we will testify with all these issues so that they can choose which one they will support or not.

**Commissioner Hernández** asked when will that be and how can we participate in that process.

**Mr. Oyanadel** responded that we do not know the date; they do it differently every year. I think we will reach out to them to find out what the dates and time frame they have for this year.

**Mr. Rodríguez** replied that any of the commissioners can contact their legislator just as a citizen having nothing to do with this board and say this is something you want.

**Commissioner Chris Soto** said that this is kind of related to dual language, ConnCAN talked about Pockets of Promise one of those being in New London and he's looking at the bill status report and so just one bill that he wants to bring up and maybe he'll talk to Commissioner Quiñones about this in terms of Priorities and Legislation, but Senate Bill 96 which is introduced by Senator Formica around magnet schools, as we know with the Governor's cuts, across the board cuts, but there are certain magnet districts that were not cut. It probably behooves us to look into that. New London is always the top proportion of English language learners in the State and so there will be a disproportionate effect to our students in our district so just want to put that bill on the radar and he will talk to Commissioner Quiñones on that.

**Chairman Cruz** announced that he wants to extend a big thank you to Commissioner O'Neill for at the last meeting in addressing some of the issues that were raised concerning the scholarship and Commissioner Rodríguez as well on some of the issues concerning with the scholarships. The Executive Board, myself, the Chair of the Special Projects and Staff recently met, we did address your concerns, we talked did over thoroughly, we saw where there could be changes made, there is a official letter that has been sent to you that you should receive today or tomorrow. At this point I would say if you have any questions please feel free to give me a call and we can discuss it and continue with helping with the Special Projects Committee, I think your input is vital and very important, you raised some really good issues I think we should be ok.

**Commissioner O'Neill** said that you mentioned you saw where changes could be made; I'd be interested in hearing what those changes are and thank you for recognizing that these are good issues. I just noticed that there was an Opinion Request that was requested the day after we had that meeting and that was never brought to my attention but I want to be clear that this was not a matter of code of ethics whether this was a violation of code of ethics, our concern was that there was a departure from procedure and from the instructions and the rules and regulations that we were given. We will not always have brilliant leaders at the helm and she is not suggesting that no one here is brilliant, she is not saying that, and we always hope for wise leaders, I am not saying that we are not wise here but the reality is it's the bell shaped curve we are varying intelligences, and understandings and wisdoms but it is our system of instructions and rules and procedures that filters our varying understandings, wisdoms and intelligences so that we remain consistent and that we are true and we are safeguarded by our procedures, so the concern was not there was an ethic violation, it was about departure from the rules and procedures and I am hoping you took note that our concerns were not directed at any particular participants, this was not about any participants. She looks forward to receiving that, and will the rest of the commission be receiving the correspondence that she will be receiving because this is a public commission.

**Chairman Cruz** replied that we sent it just to you, if you want it to the rest of the committee we can do that but because you raised it we figure we addressed your concerns.

**Commissioner O'Neill** added that it is also from Commissioner Rodríguez.

**Chairman Cruz** said and also to Commissioner Rodríguez.

**Mr. Oyanadel** indicated that all LPRAC Commissioners would receive a copy of the memo in the packets next month.

**Commissioner O'Neill** said thank you for welcoming her continued input on the scholarships.

**Chairman Cruz** thanked her for her input, he appreciates it.

**Motion made that LPRAC supports the Students 4 A Dream request to have access to institutional aid by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy.**

#### **Discussion:**

**Mr. Rodríguez** wanted to inform the committee that you don't always get to know what's going on, there's a lot of stuff going on, but concerning the undocumented students, he has been asked by Mr. Ojakian who is the new President of the CT State University System to go talk to him about declining enrollments and one of the things he is going to propose is to fill his vacant seats with undocumented students.



**Motion was adopted by voice vote with one abstention, Commissioner O'Neill.**

**Motion made that we move forward and begin planning conversations for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Latino Policy Day in 2017 by Commissioner Quiñones and seconded by Commissioner Hernández.**

**Discussion:**

**Mr. Oyanadel** said that this was a very costly event we coordinated it thanks to the monetary support of the Hispanic Federation. He warned LPRAC not to pass unfunded motions or pass motions without considering costs particularly in light of the current budget conditions affecting the State of Connecticut but in this instance and in his opinion the Latino Policy Days will be budgeted by the Hispanic Federation.

**Commissioner Castillo** said the event was wonderful and she thinks we should have it annually but she also thinks that because of the lack of funding we should have other partners and there were many people that collaborated with us so if we can find these other people that would collaborate, she thinks that we can do a better one for next year.

**Commissioner Hernández** agreed and said that part of their thinking as they were discussing it at the Priorities and Legislation Committee and were debriefing with Mr. Rodríguez is that their reason for bring it this early on is so that they can successfully begin to plan because you know that reality is that funding is always an issue and it would be great if we can have the Hispanic Federation come along side of us again but as it is clearly been pointed out to us that there are others that can come along side of us and this event can be so much far reaching than just what we had at the last session. Very well put.

**Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

**Motion made to adjourn at 7:30 p.m. by Commissioner Castillo and seconded by Commissioner Trueworthy.  
Motion was adopted by voice vote.**

Respectfully submitted by,

Emanuela Palmares  
Secretary  
LPRAC Board

EPL:cjc